



Spilling his heart on canvas

Zhang Xiaogang is one of the biggest names in Chinese art: his early creations have certainly set auction house records. But critics say Zhang's work never matured beyond an endless parade of melancholy figures.

They may be surprised by his new collection.

After two heart attacks, Zhang is finally creating pieces that combine his generation's collective memory with his own.

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British man with a big heart

Tony Day is one of the most recognized faces in Chinese charity. In 2002, he sold his three companies, manor and two sports cars to come and feed the hungry in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province.

Day is one of the many foreigners who have come to China to create charitable organizations.

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Traditional popcorn popping machine a hit in US

By Bao Chengrong

China's oldest popcorn makers were featured abroad on a recent episode of the popular TV series *MythBusters*.

Titled "Express Popcorn," the episode aimed to figure out whether the popcorn makers used by old street vendors were popcorn cookers or miniature bombs.

One of the hosts put on a protective suit, filled the cooker with popcorn, sealed it and began heating it over a charcoal flame. When he lifted the release valve, the canister exploded from the pressure and sent hot popcorn flying everywhere.

While the machine was not speedy – taking 9 minutes and 31 seconds to pop the corn – it was a lot of fun.

Chinese netizens expressed amusement at the protective gear the host used to handle what used to be a common sight on every street.

The traditional cookers



Snapshot from the *MythBusters* episode.

are a reminder of childhood and simpler times for the '80s generation.

Qiu Ruixiang, 23, said he used to see the machine in Maoming, Guangdong Province, when he was a boy.

While playing on the village streets with his friends, Qiu often saw an old vendor using a charcoal briquette to heat the popper. The popping

process took 20 minutes. As soon as the vendor took the cooker off the flame, he ran away and returned only after the explosion.

"Although I ran as fast as I could, I was still shocked by the deafening bang," Qiu said.

He said popcorn cooked by the machine is less sweet than modern popcorn, and often has a charred taste.

Some netizens wrote on Sina Weibo that popcorn cooked by the old machine tastes better because it "tastes like childhood."

Liu Wenjun, 58, a popcorn vendor in Nanning, Guangxi Province, benefited from the US program.

The *Guangxi News* reported that the new popularity of the old machine has helped him attract more customers and win chances to perform with other craftsmen at local cultural activities.

Liu has worked as a popcorn cooker for 30 years and said he was saddened that the traditional craft is near extinction.

Popcorn makers are not the only craftsmen vanishing: sugar blowers, coppersmiths and pen menders are vanishing as well.

Shen Hao, a deputy curator of the Nanjing Folklore Museum, said it will be a sad day when people will only

know these old trades from history books.

Shen said the main reason traditional crafts are vanishing is because the markets they occupied are dying. Also, young people don't have patience to learn traditional crafts and often see such work as beneath them.

The lack of government support is another burden. Only a handful of crafts are scheduled for protection under the National Intangible Heritage Act.

Fu Qiping, a deputy to the National People's Congress, encouraged some old businesses to reinvent themselves as traveling products. He suggested the government begin compiling notes, pictures and videos about vanishing industries.

Fu also said the government should give subsidies to craftsmen and open classes to help young people learn and pass on the crafts.

British man sells family property for charity in China

By Liu Xiaochen

Last September, *Huashang News* reported the story of Tony Day, a British man who has spent his last seven years giving steamed buns to vagrants on the streets of Xi'an, Shanxi Province.

Day is well known in the vagrant community for offering free dinners every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 6 pm. Served on Wuxing Street, the meals include stuffed buns and a bowl of porridge.

The 46-year-old retired naval electronic engineer sold his three companies, manor and two sports cars in the UK in 2002 and began sponsoring charity work around the world.

"My parents and friends thought I was crazy," Day said, "Most of my friends complained about their cars and homes. Comparing up (to the rich) only made them unhappy. It made me unhappy too," he said.

In 2005, he settled in Xi'an and founded an NGO



Tony Day is well-recognized by locals for his charity work.

CFP Photo

named Yellow River Soup Kitchen to offer food to the city's homeless.

Over the past seven years, Day has invested more than 700,000 yuan to provide free

food and other daily necessities to needy locals. Every Christmas Day, he holds a party and gives vagrants the chance to take a shower.

His supporting volun-

teers often travel to elementary schools in the countryside to organize sports meets, screen movies and repair school facilities.

His Yellow River Soup

Kitchen has two goals: to provide help to those in need and to provide a platform for helping others.

Many of China's public charity organizations are established by foreigners.

Bethel, a public charity organization founded in Langfang, Hebei Province by Guillaume and Delphine Gouvain of France, is a charity providing foster care and training. It is the first and only organization dedicated to supporting China's blind and visually impaired orphans.

Organizations such as New Day Foster Home, founded in Daxing District by an American couple surnamed Brenneman, help children with other disabilities.

Many foreigners have made a name for themselves with their charity projects.

William Lindsay, a British man who has been helping to clean up trash for more than 10 years, is one of China's most recognized faces in charity.

City's axis may be unworthy of world heritage status

Beijing's axis

Beijing's Central Axis is the straight line running from Yongdingmen Tower in the south, through the 800-year-old Forbidden City and out the Bell and Drum towers to the north.

The axis extends 7.8 kilometers and links many historical sites, including the Temple of Heaven, Temple of Agriculture, Imperial Divine Temple, Imperial Ancestral Temple, Qianmen, Tian'anmen, Forbidden City, Jingshan and the Bell and Drum towers.

The Temple of Heaven was where the emperor went to pray for rain; the Temple of Agriculture was where he announced the start of the agricultural season.

The Imperial Divine Temple, known today as Zhongshan Park, was where the emperor prayed for good harvests; the Imperial Ancestral Temple was where he honored and worshiped his ancestors.

Qianmen used to be the southern gate of the royal palace, while Tian'anmen was the southern gate of the emperor's personal living area. To the north, Jingshan was built using dirt excavated during the construction of the Forbidden City.

The Bell and Drum towers were the city's time-keeping system during the imperial era.

The axis, together with the

By Zhao Hongyi

Next year, China will submit a petition to the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) to grant world heritage status to Beijing's Central Axis and the Grand Canal.

But as the application date draws near, experts are questioning whether the central axis can even be considered a heritage site: too many of its buildings have been damaged and replaced by new constructions.

China is obsessed with heritage status. In fact, it already has more UNESCO recognized world heritage sites than any other nation.

It might be time to ask, what's the point?

Forbidden City, is shaped like the Chinese ideogram for "center," reflecting the royal family's absolute belief that they were indeed the center of the world.

Today, the axis has been extended north of North Fifth Ring Road to Yangshan, with the National Stadium and National Gymnasium on its west.

Charmless buildings

All of the new buildings along the axis have been created after the founding of the People's Republic of China.

In the 1950s, the Great Hall of the People and China National Museum were built on each side of Tian'anmen Square, which itself has been through several rounds of reconstruction as well.

In the 1990s, construction of Liangguang Avenue and Ping'an Avenue, which run east to west and parallel to the Chang'an Avenue, further broke apart the axis.

And that's to say nothing of the very Soviet style buildings such as Chairman Mao's Memorial, the Monument to the People's Heroes.

The Forbidden City has become a national museum, and the Imperial Divine Temple and Ancestral Temple have become public parks.

With the historic axis utterly smashed, how can the government be expecting to win UNESCO recognition?

"All the constructions along the axis can be regarded as an inseparable part of the Central Axis," said Zhang Miaodi, a Beijing historian at Beijing Union University.

"Actually, we can categorize the different parts into blocks, including the nearby Tianqiao entertainment area and Di'anmen business area," she said.

Yang Liuyin, party secretary of Dongcheng District, where most of the buildings are located, said the relocating of

"residents away from the Bell and Drum towers, an estimated around 180 families, will be done by the end of the year."

It has similar plans to move local residents who live near the Temple of Heaven.

"These buildings are historic sites that house great meaning," Zhang said. "That is what makes the Central Axis as a whole worthy of world heritage status."

Lingering suspicions

China's world heritage obsession has been going on for decades. It is estimated that China might have more UNESCO recognized world heritage sites, intangible world heritage and culture heritage than any other nation.

What's more, the central government, provincial governments and local governments grant similar national-level status.

Much of it has to do with ambitions to develop regional

tourism and apply for access to government funds.

More seriously, the construction of "ancient" buildings at scenic spots is a highly visible way to show that local officials are actually doing something.

It's the same in the case of the Grand Canal. The canal has completely dried up in the north, though it remains in use at the south end.

The rapid development of China's townships has changed the government's view of the Grand Canal, but many experts are still insisting on applying for world heritage status.

Kong Fanzhi, director of the Beijing Municipal Administration of Cultural Heritage, said UNESCO has no restrictions on reconstruction.

"It really depends on the case," he said. "Many parts of the Forbidden City have been reconstructed, but it was still granted world heritage status in the end."

Zhang Miaodi disagrees.

"We must be very careful when reconstructing a world heritage site," she said. "New buildings will damage the view of the original ones and disrupt the atmosphere of the site."

"It's more useful to develop the economy and make full use of these ancient sites rather than applying for world heritage status," a netizen named "Zhidaao" said.



The government's plan to seek the world heritage status for Beijing's Central Axis has many opponents.

CFP Photo

History and memory frozen in art

By Chen Nan

Following heart attacks and a year's rest, Zhang Xiaogang is having his first solo exhibition in two years.

His latest works, collected in *Beijing Voice*, are on exhibition at Pace Beijing through the end of the month. In March, they leave for Pace's New York gallery.

The evolution of Zhang's artistic language is on display at this show. His new works show contemplation on his own memories, as well as the collective memory of his generation.

Each reflects an element of contemporary culture blended with the artist's own personal development.

Few artists embody the big-money, big-name era of Chinese art like Zhang Xiaogang.

Celebrated for his *The Big Family* and *Bloodline* series, Zhang's paintings are often monochromatic, stylized portraits of Chinese people. Most have large eyes and dark pupils, dress in Mao jackets and comrade caps and stand in the stiff manner of a 1950s portrait.

His works, conjured from childhood memories of the Cultural Revolution, earned him the title of China's most expensive artist. When displayed abroad, they are seen as archetypes of modern China.

But over the decades, Zhang's work has evolved little. With his endless parade of melancholy and isolated figures, critics have accused him of becoming repetitive and uncreative.

This exhibition may change some minds.

His latest changes have thematic and visual connections to his previous work even as he progresses into new ideas.

Linked to the past

In his newest works, Zhang returns to the stylized tone of bygone days. His narration is rich in emotional connotations, yet still retains a touch of rationality.

The new images interpret China's cultural and historical memory, but with a hint of self-exploration.

"In past shows, I would designate a theme for the paintings series. This time I didn't stick to any theme," he said. He sees the new pieces as a product of intuition rather than any rational planning. "I followed the feelings of my body," he said.

There are a few new elements in these creations. The glimmering flashlights and intermittent strobes are rendered as a variation and natural progression of the red lines seen in *The Big Family*.

His strokes carry a touch of plum trees and potted pine trees, seen in the *Book of Amnesia*, which are a symbol of intellectual independence in traditional Chinese art.

"I've been interested in pines and plums since 2009, when I started to reflect on the interaction between Chinese tradition, socialism and myself," he said.

A Soviet-style sofa set, an old-fashioned double bed, a porcelain spittoon and a waist-high section of green wall — each of these compositions is part of the collective memory of several generations.

Zhang said people from his generation witnessed too much change and lost their individuality. Their lives are a construct of others and their pasts.

Memory will always be the core of his work.

Zhang grew up in a two-room apartment in Chengdu during the Cultural Revolution.

He was always together with his three brothers, aunt and his mother, who would later be diagnosed as schizophrenic.

His parents went away to different parts of the country and returned to see him every several weeks or months.

In his new collection, a child dangles his legs off a couch as he sits beside his solemn-looking mother. A flashlight rests on a rock as its light shines on the pages of an open book. The piece echoes his *Bloodline* series.

The portrait of a mother and son is an expression of the dis-

tance he felt to his mother as a child.

"We didn't really understand her, or why she would sit staring at nothing and not talking for a long time," he said.

Similarly, *My Father* shows a young girl sitting on a separate couch from her father, who appears unsmiling and staring out of the picture. Her body is twisted towards him, but he sits impervious and impassive.

Zhang said the man is a reflection of his father, who was dressed in his blue military-style suit.

"My siblings and I rarely saw him, and he was never very intimate with me or my brothers. He only told us that our mother was sick when we were in our early teens," he said.

Such personal expression was rare in his past pieces.

And wrenching that from the depths of his heart may have damaged his health.

Fighting illness

Zhang, now 54, has suffered two heart attacks in recent years.

He received emergency surgery to repair a blocked artery in his heart last year. After a second surgery 10 months later, his doctor warned him to alter his lifestyle.

Zhang has long indulged in whiskey and cigarettes. After his mother died in her sleep during the spring of 2010, he began drinking more than ever.

By November, he had suffered his first heart attack.

Three days later, he was home from surgery and hurrying to rushing to finish eight paintings for a show at Beijing's Today Art Museum.

Even at a frenetic pace, he only managed to fill two of the three galleries he was being given.

On May 22, 2011, he felt a second tightness in his chest. At the hospital, the doctors insisted he put his career on pause.

He spent the rest of 2011 contemplating ways to relieve the pressures of his vocation.

What has captivated viewers this time is less Zhang's works than the personal tale within them — a heart-wrenching story of artistic triumph over rough circumstances.

"A traumatic experience can bring back old memories you had forgotten. When I became ill, I started to think about my relationship with my kid, and then about my own childhood," he said.

Commercially fruitful

For decades, Zhang's paintings have been the darling of auction houses and private collectors.

His earliest works are selling for more than ever.

Three Comrades, a part of his *Bloodline* series, sold for \$2.1 million at Sotheby's New York in 2007. Another part of the series, *The Big Family No. 3*, sold for more than \$6 million at Sotheby's Hong Kong the next year.

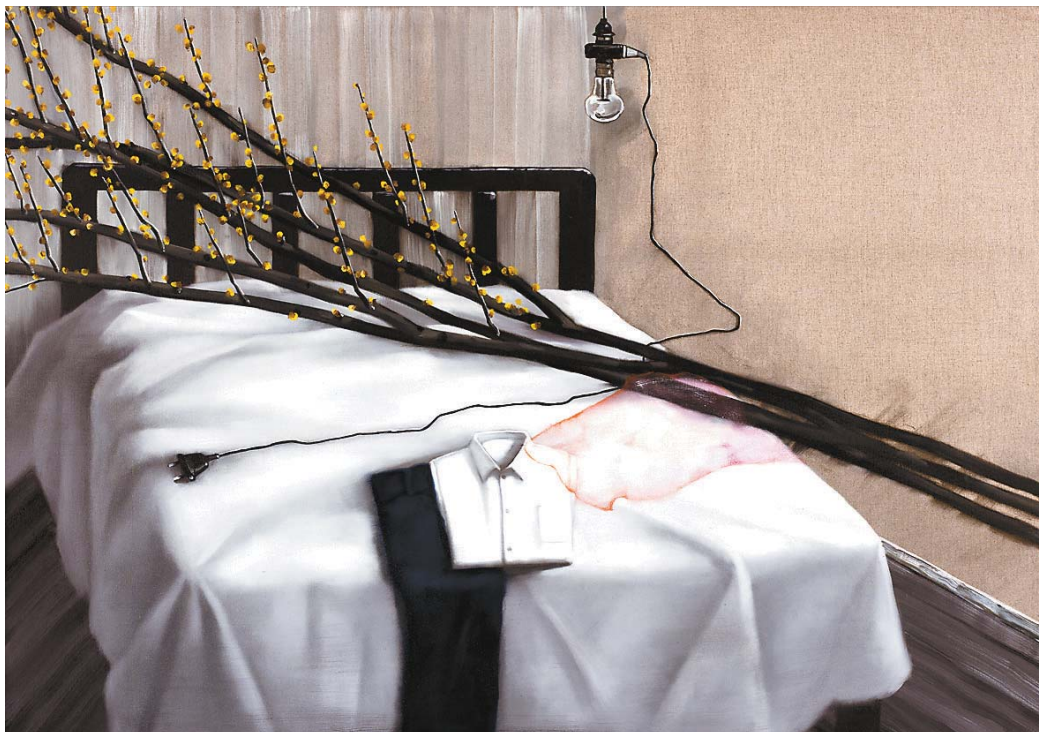
His 1998 triptych *Forever Lasting Love*, a 1988 painting he sold for \$2,000, was recently auctioned by Sotheby's Hong Kong for a record-setting \$10.2 million.

That year, Zhang signed a contract with PaceWildenstein (now Pace), one of the first New York galleries to open an outpost in Beijing.

Since then, *Beijing Voice* has been a perennial exhibition.



photos provided by Pace Beijing



“I see the condition as the collective embarrassment of the people.”

Umbrella's social portrait China's 'collective shame'

By Chen Nan

Filmed in five regions, *Umbrella* provides a close look at the vast changes that have taken place in Chinese society, including the rise of a prosperous new class of businesspeople, millions of new college graduates competing for a shrinking job market, a massive migration from the countryside to the cities and the neglect of China's largest population group: its rural peasants.

Du Haibin's *Umbrella* was made in 2007 with the support of CNEX, an organization that cultivates interest in documentaries and nurtures filmmakers.

It was screened in the competition section for the Horizon Documentary Prize at 2007 Venice Film Festival. Using an umbrella as a metaphor, it mainly follows several groups of people, showing increasingly sharp disparity between urban and rural life.

For Du, capturing this subject was a personal goal.



Natural connection

Born in the prefecture-level city of Baoji, Shaanxi Province, Du has been fascinated with art since his childhood. He learned traditional painting from his grandma.

Although frames and Chinese ink didn't inspire him to express himself, his major in college did.

In 2000, he was admitted to the Beijing Film Academy, where he majored in photography.

"Photographing helped me find myself, and I gradually learned how to use a lens to create telling stories," the director said.

Loving film narration and longing to be a director, he saw his flaws clearly and was frustrated by his lack of life experiences.

But he found a way to compensate – by talking to people with stories.

His first short documentary began with a vagabond, and soon he began asking everyone who crossed his path for an interview.

Most people turned him down, but over time he found some people who were willing to tell their stories.

Though broad social issues are clearly his passion, he began his career as a director with *Dou Dou* (1999), the daily life of a worker.

"At first I was only able to record images of people around me," he said. Later, he expanded his outlook and turned his lens to more marginalized groups.

Thanks to a childhood spent hanging out with idlers or riff-raff, he quickly built a connection with his subject group: the young homeless.

That work, *Along the Railway*, followed young vagrants in Baoji County as they gathered on a trash platform near the railway. The film,

completed in 2000, won Du several awards at the China Independent Film Festival and YAMAGATA International Documentary Film Festival, as well as his first taste of fame.

Du began producing new documentaries each year. In 2005, his fifth documentary, *Beautiful Men*, received the prestigious Best Documentary award at the Pusan International Film Festival, and was screened at a number of art house cinemas.

"The values of Chinese people are closely connected to our society, and their living status reflects the changes that have taken place," he said.

"I see recording people's lives objectively during times of change as my responsibility. Through my work, I can directly experience different walks of life," he said.

Du's *Umbrella* is a kaleidoscope of society, offering a comprehensive look into China's status quo.

Filmed in an observational style with no narration or commentary, the film is clearly divided into five segments.

It tracks core groups in China – workers, merchants, students, soldiers and farmers – to examine their present status, as the concept of wealth is redefined and the farming culture is shoved aside by modernization.

Among its vignettes is a look into the lives of young employees at a factory in Zhongshan, Guangdong Province.

Opening on an umbrella factory and using these utilitarian devices as a running theme throughout, Du offers an intensely personal close-up of his subjects and their struggles, observing their daily routines, camaraderie and isolation.

Du underlies the meager compensation employees earn for each task with a close-up shot of one young girl's coarse, cracked hands as she sews umbrella spokes into the fabric.

This monotonous, endless and rapid work earns only a pittance.

With the exception of an aging farmer's monologue, the film uses a special perspective to observe lives physically distant from the viewer – but not so far removed from the experiences of his or her inner world.

Du then turns his focus on a massive shopping mall, the "World's Largest Small Commodity Market," in Yiwu, Zhejiang Province, where the colorful umbrellas are sold at an incredible markup by wholesale merchants – China's nouveaux riche.

The film also shows throngs of young people filling out applications at a job fair in Shanghai.

Finally, on a farm in Henan Province, a group of elders struggle to salvage a premature harvest of drought-affected wheat.

"Our life differs from that of people living in the countryside. We live in cities, where we enjoy social development and progress, as well as the fruits of science and culture," the director said. "Recording this is all I can do. It is not a display of superiority. On the contrary, I see the condition as the collective embarrassment of the people."

"I am interested in filming how people have changed in the past few decades and how society's transformation has affected their lives," he said. "This is what I think documentary is about. When you watch them again in five or 10 years, you can reflect on those images and consider how they've changed."



Photos provided by CNEX

Norlha's shawls an exquisite investment

By Annie Wei

When Farmer's Market core member Qi Dafu showed off her new purchase – a thick rug made of yak wool – her friends were surprised.

They all knew Qi would spend a lot of money on quality food, but never on fashion.

"I have had four scarves from the same brand," she said. "They are all so warm."

The scarves are a specialty product of Norlha, a workshop in the village of Ritoma in Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province.

If you travel to Tibet or bordering regions like Yunnan Province, you will bump into quite a few vendors that sell khullu, or yak wool products, but seldom as exquisite as Norlha's.

Google it.

There are dozens of articles introducing the brand and interviewing the founder, which should tell you a Norlha shawl is a wise investment.

While many workshops that have reached out to urban consumers have failed in quality, Norlha has turned the almost-forgotten yak wool into something that rivals the quality of high-end Paris fashion brands such as Antik Batik, Arnys, Juliette Ozouf, Sonia Rykiel, Christophe Lemaire and Balmain.

That feat took two generations of preparation and devotion.

Kim Sciaky-Yeshi, 56, a US-French anthropologist who married a Tibetan man, always had a passion for beautiful weaving.

In 2005, she sent her daughter Dechen and son Genam to Gannan Prefecture to see what they could do with yak wool.

The product turned out to be wonderful, and the mother and daughter decided to start Norlha in 2007 to help the local economy.

To harness the high quality fiber, they sent four people to study weaving in India.

Dechen Yeshi, 31, who planned to become a filmmaker after graduating from an American school, now runs the workshop in Gannan.



100 percent yak wool handmade hat

She helps train and manage the team of 150 local nomads, most of whom were illiterate when they started.

But once they learned, their speed became faster and faster, the daughter said in an interview.

Now Norlha has four designers, said Thopdan Dorjee, the brand's office manager in Beijing.

Norlha means "wealth of the Gods," which is also

what nomads call their yaks – the source of their treasure.

Seeing Norlha's stock in Beijing can be a disorienting experience. None of the scarves are available in the candy colors that have been so popular in recent years.

That's because yak wool is naturally dark – much darker than cashmere.

To avoid using the toxic dyes common in the fashion industry, brand founder Kim Yeshi insisted on not bleaching the khullu and using eco-friendly dyes made in Switzerland.

This gives Norlha's products a richer, more natural color. Its shades are forest greens, mustard yellows, Bordeaux reds and deep blues – the colors that suit chilly winter days.

While yak wool is thick and coarse, beneath it is a layer of fine wool. When it is spun and woven



100 percent yak wool scarves

Photos by An Jianguo



Yak felt iPad case

well, the scarves are soft and comfortable to wear – and much warmer to cashmere.

As a wearable investment, khullu is much rarer than cashmere. To collect it, the nomads have to wait till it falls and pick it up by hand.

Norlha only collects the best khullu from the two-year-old yaks. Dorjee, the Beijing manager, said that only 28 of every 100 kilograms of raw fiber meet the quality needed to make a shawl.

The workshop produces as many as 10,000 woven shawls, throws and blankets every year. Nearly 7,000 are sold overseas and 3,000 are consumed in the domestic market.

Most are sold at bazaars held in the international community, but Norlha plans to expand its business in the domestic market this year.

UCCA store

Where: 798 Art Zone, 4 Jiuxianqiao, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6810 8844

Aman at Summer Palace

Where: 1 Qian Jie, Yiheyuan Gongmen, Haidian District

Tel: 5987 9999

Shanghai Trio in Sanlitun

Where: NLG-38, ground floor, Village North, 11 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6417 3606

Norlha uses its real employees to shoot product photos.

Photo provided by norlha.fr



Great deals on dining

By Annie Wei

After the Chinese New Year holidays, small and homey restaurants are back in business. This week, *Beijing Today* scouted delicious food and drinks at affordable prices



CFP Photos

Qingshu's new Chongqing hotpot

The most popular Chongqing hotpot spot is Yangjia Huoguo at Xinfu Ercun, found in a small alley opposite to the north gate of Worker's Stadium.

You need to make a reservation four days in advance if you plan to have dinner there with your friends.

Thankfully, fans of Chongqing food now have another option: Qingshu.

Unlike Yangjia's used oil hotpot – a typical way of cooking that preserves flavors, Qingshu uses fresh oil each day for its hotpot.

Each customer is given a small pot (soup starting from 12 yuan). The most recommended soup is Jiangyou feichang, a spicy broth with fat pork intestines named for the small town where it was invented.

If you dislike heat, consider the milder jizhi haidian, a chicken and seaweed broth, or sanzhen baiyu, with mushrooms and tofu.

The cost of each plate of



meat and vegetables is inexpensive. There are many options, such as cauliflower (8 yuan), duck blood (10 yuan), mushroom (12 yuan), tofu (10 yuan) and beef (starting from 28 yuan).

The restaurant is decorated like a cafe with lots of bookshelves. It's easy to find, located on the second floor by Very Thai at Xinyuan Xi Li, north of the Taiyuan Diplomatic Compound.

Qingshu

Where: Floor 2, Building 7, 10 Xinyuan Xi Li Dong Jie, Chaoyang District
Open: 3-10 pm
Tel: 5617 0179

Old fashioned cocktails



Graceful south with low alcohol

Photos by An Jianguo

Unlimited drinks for 99 yuan

Flamme has always been popular for its decent food and reasonable prices.

Four weeks ago, it started a new promotion, offering unlimited cocktails every Wednesday from 7:30 to 9:30 pm for 99 yuan.

Although its cocktails and wines are half price on weekdays from 3 to 7:30 pm, many people cannot make it because they are still at the office.

The deal has attracted many customers after work, considering many of its drinks are priced 70 yuan or more.

We tried a few, such as

the elderflower martini (70 yuan), made of gin, Sauvignon Blanc wine, elderflower syrup, shaken and served with frozen grapes; as well as dark night (70 yuan), made of Bourbon stirred with Averna, cherry brandy and bitters.

All tasted good, and it was a great place to meet friends for a few drinks.

Flamme

Where: S4-33, Floor 3, Sanlitun Village, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 10 pm

Tel: 6417 8608

Huoshao, the easy and affordable 'Beijing burger'

For a simple, warm and delicious meal, nothing is better than huoshao served at a clean eatery.

We recommended two places specializing in huoshao, a traditional pan-fried bun or stick with different stuffings.

One is Dalian Huoshao, located in a neighborhood by Hepingli. The restaurant is a haunt of many middle-aged diners, and during the meal hours you will have to wait.

Although it offers home-style fried dishes, its huoshao (starting at 8 yuan) are best when stuffed with pork and fennel, lamb and green onion or vegetables. The sticks are fried golden and a little charred – crispy outside yet tender inside.

Another huoshao place we liked was Wangpangzi, south of the Beixinqiao subway station. The big glass window hutong home may not be much to look at, but its donkey huoshao (starting at 9 yuan) are delicious and tender.

Order a huoshao and a bowl of



Guoshao

Photo provided by Google.com

congee (5 yuan) or donkey soup (15 yuan) to feel full and warm.

Xuji Dalian Huoshao

Where: opposite the gas station east of Jiangzhakou's intersection, the first intersection north of Andingmen subway station, Dongcheng District

Open: 11 am – 2 pm, 5-9 pm

Tel: 6420 5345

Wangpangzi Huoshao

Where: 92 Dongsu Bei Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: 11 am – 10 pm